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In the past century Claddin isolated Region still most of
the clothing of the small farmers was made at home by the 294
women. Now, however, it is nearly all shop-bought. Certain 461
vestiges of the former practice remain, however, in knitting 476
sweaters, gloves, socks, and scarfs; and in the country dis- 178
tricts, at least of West and North Clare, there is a custom
which demands that some woman of the house be always at
work. If there is no other task on hand, they must occupy
themselves with knitting. In former days, the daughters of
the community might gather in a *meitheal*, or coöperative
work group, under the supervision of older women for card-
ing and spinning flax and wool. In any event, the younger
woman, the girl, is at the older woman's command.

Much the same content of emotion and sentiment exists 593
in this relationship, subordinate as the daughter must re-
main, as in the case of the boy. But in the case of the daugh-
ter there is never a readjustment, and there is never a period
of community of interest with the father. Nor need the
mother fear a competition with an impatient oncoming suc-
cessor as must the farm father who knows he cannot put off
forever his relinquishing his farm to his son. For, eagerly
as the daughter may look forward to her own marriage, she
knows that marriage will bring in a rivalry over household
control with a totally new person in an entirely new scene.
It is her husband's mother, not her own, to whom new ad-
justments must be made. The implication of this fact, and
the struggle it entails, will bear examination in the discussion
of marriage.

Still another relationship exists within the household un-
der normal circumstances. The relationship of brother to
sister has its reflection in farm work. But it is a relationship
with a different history from the relationship between sib-
lings of similar sex. Sexual differences in behavior have
made a different habit, beginning very early in the child's
experience. And, for each of them, the sexual differences
are colored a great deal by the norms which mark the rela-

654 Where the question arises, a household consisting of father and
594 mother and sons, rather than daughters alone, would have a prior claim. But, regarding the position of the wife, it is a fact that, if the husband goes, the wife keeps the farm up. She is the person who saves the money and governs everything.

Again:

594 Twenty to twenty-five acres of all-purpose land where the
462 mother is normal and the father energetic is sufficient to keep a farmer and his family. It is the province of the mother to look after the fowl, the milk, the butter, the pigs, the calves, and the milking of the cows. A woman on a small farm can milk five cows in thirty minutes. She also takes care of the children, though she sometimes has a girl in to help her for a time. She also makes and repairs the clothes. She does the buying for the house and the husband only for feed, seed and fertilizer. She has the responsibility regarding medical attention, and where she has any showing of culture the family pushes on ahead. In fact, on the mother depends the organization of the family in all ways.

594 Such evidence points to a situation in which the immediate family of husband, wife, and children, the group basic to Irish society and especially to Irish rural life, carries on a corporate economy. The roles of the component individuals are assigned them by virtue of their position in the family. The character of the economic effort, its control, direction, and purposes, are part and parcel of the life of the social group.

● 476 Beyond the family economy of the small farm, there exists also a certain amount of coöperation in the Irish countryside among the small farmers. Agricultural labor upon the individual farms is not performed in isolated competition, but is permeated with a give-and-take of reciprocal aids. That coöperation takes the following forms:

1. Lending tools, or doing the work with one's own, for friends and neighbors who have not the requisite tools, especially in mowing, spring sowing, harrowing, ploughing.

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2. Lending a boy at turf making, spring sowing, hay harvest, oats harvest, or driving cattle to a fair; that is, at any time that the farm needs an extra hand to get its work done quickly.
3. Of women: making up a tub of butter, or firkin of salted butter, thus pooling resources, the proceeds to be divided proportionately.
4. Of women: lending a girl on any occasion that an extra hand is needed in the household.
5. Helping at times of distress, or when one household is short or a crop delayed, with gifts of cattle, food, or labor.
6. Working together communally to get a harvest done, particularly the oats reaping and threshing. Here again the actual work is done by the "boys," who are lent by their fathers, though, of course, the latter may also take a hand, if necessary.
7. Obligations surrounding *rites de passage* and ceremonies.

In former days this coöperation was more widespread, according to the testimony of the older people. But even today the oats harvest, which used to be celebrated locally by a large dinner and dance at the expense of the farmer whose crop was being reaped by "friends" [1] and neighbors, still calls forth some coöperation of the next to last type.

In recent years the farmers have been wealthy enough to acquire their own horses, carts (called "cars," only two-wheeled vehicles being used, at least in Clare), and mowing machines. In the last century, however, these were less numerous and, as an older countryman put it: "Once if you had a horse and car, you'd have forty or fifty people helping you with the turf.

Similarly, before the mowing machine became general, ten or a dozen "friends" and neighbors would work each other's meadows in turn with the scythe. Nowadays, the owner of a machine need only go about to his "friends" and cut their hay for them, getting their aid in return in building his own stacks and hayricks.

[1] Used here in the sense explained in Chapter V.

476 246 The commonest form of coöperation is that which involves lending a boy to a "friend" whenever he is needed. In order to illustrate this form of coöperation and to give the setting in which it takes place, it will be well to describe the hay harvest in a country district. We choose the district [471] of Luogh. Luogh is a mountain region of small holdings, none of them larger than twenty-five acres, divided among twenty-four households. There was only one large farmer in the immediate vicinity; he worked his lands through a herdsman and, as he had his own hired hands, did not figure in the haymaking. All the rest of the holders had what is called "general purpose land" by the Land Commissioners; they had some bog, some meadow, several fields being grazed over, and a garden of potatoes, rye, cabbage, and oats, always less than an acre in extent. The number of cattle each had ranged from six cows, two calves, and two bullocks held by one holder with sixteen acres of mountain land and an addition about three miles off in fertile bottomland (he had got this, eight acres, several years before from the Land [737] Commission) to none. The person having no cattle was an old bachelor, an old-age pensioner, who lived by himself on a farm of four acres stocked only with a few hens.

476 246 621 589 The hay was early, the weather favorable, and the harvest began in mid-July. All the holders except two were Luogh people related by complicated ties of blood and ancestral association to the land and to each other. There were three lone bachelors, a widow helped by her brother, and three widowers helped respectively by one son, three sons and a daughter, and two sons. The other holders were married couples with each a son or two and perhaps a daughter present, if they were old, and many growing children if they [167] were not. The region was one of large-scale emigration, so that a smaller number of young people were present than is perhaps usual.

476 246 As the hay ripened and the weather turned fine, the fami-

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lies began to save the hay, mowing it, letting it dry, and stacking it as soon as possible, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six to eight foot haycocks. After several weeks it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. There was a great deal of interest and much comment back and forth over the progress of the various families, the probable weather, and the yield of the various meadows. The men seemed to feel a general rivalry to do their work well and quickly. About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows as quickly as possible, working from earliest morning as long as light held. They worked with the aid of their sons and with that of boys from the families who had no machines of their own. At each subsequent stage of the harvesting, a boy or young man not a member of the family whose meadow was being worked could be seen giving his labor in aid; he took his place at meals during the day.

The mowing done, the farmer then took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed the meadows belonging to his friend. In one instance a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others; in another, of two. Certain meadows were full-handed enough not to require extra hands, and in five cases no help was given, though the mowing and stacking took a very long time with them in comparison to the others, and they were obviously short-handed. Two of these were bachelors who lived alone, and two more were the "strangers." Two other families had insufficient meadow of their own and were forced to buy hay on the so-called "conacre" system (buying the hay as it stands and reaping it oneself within a stipulated time).

Here then was an example of an important agricultural operation undertaken by the local community in which provision was made (except in five or six cases) for effective cooperation over and above the usual family economy. This is not an isolated instance; in Luogh it has been the practice

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476 246 from time immemorial. Old people here remembered the day when, there being no mowing machines, scythes alone were used. Then the coöperating groups would have been larger and a more pronounced rotation of the working groups from meadow to meadow could have been observed. The same custom occurs in other places; in fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work. Given the different techniques, the same coöperation had taken place in Luogh and elsewhere at the turf cutting, the oats harvest, and the potato planting.

[164] Yet there was no monetary wage or payment involved. In the community of Luogh and surrounding townlands, the only hired labor was to be seen in the meadows of the large farmer (a cattleman with over three hundred acres), [184] who had not coöperated with the small farmers and whose entire way of life, as well as the agriculture he practiced, was different from theirs. Except in so far as the agricultural operation the small farmers were undertaking was economic in itself, it was evident that an interpretation of the incentives for this coöperation must include other factors.

476 246 602 Driven to social rather than economic explanation, the authors were able to ascertain that in each case of this coöperation there was an extended family relationship involved. Thus Carey, who had mowed the meadows of Dennis and Seamus Molony and Brian McMahon, was second cousin to them. Peter Barrett was first cousin and uncle respectively of the two farmers whose meadows he had mowed. The young men or boys who had worked Carey's and Barrett's meadows with the latter's wives and children were also relatives; they were sons of the relatives for whom Carey and Barrett had mowed.

So it went over the townland. In no instance, of course, had a man mowed for all his relatives; it was not necessary

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to do so. In one instance a man had mowed for a neighbor who, while not a relative, was a great boon companion. Furthermore, the bachelors whom no one had helped had, of course, been able to help no one. And the two strangers who had moved into the townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives "on this side." One of these was a man who had never got along with his neighbors, accused the whole townland of plotting against him, and was cordially disliked in return. The other had the help of a boy sent by a cousin in a near-by townland.

The generic term "cooring" is given to all non-monetary coöperation of this sort in many parts of Clare. The word is a direct borrowing from the Irish *comhair*, which is similarly used, originally meaning cotillage, now having the added meanings of alliance or partnership. But more interesting was the fact that the small farmers explained their cooring in terms of the "friendliness" of the place. So, we shall see, the term "friendly" is applied to the extended (and also immediate) relatives or "friends."

When asked especially why they were coöperating, the farmers' answer was that they "had right to help." In general terms they would phrase it that "you have right to help friends," or again that "country people do be very friendly; they always help one another."

Now the phrase "have right" is an expression in the brogue or English dialect spoken in Ireland (and in Clare) which, like "friendly," is a translation of a Gaelic idiom. It expresses an obligation, duty, or the traditional fitness of an act. The Gaelic word for which it is a substitute is *cóir*, and a bilingual countryman translates the Gaelic phrase *tá cóir orm* (the obligation is on me) into "I have right to." The countrymen of Clare, at least, do not ordinarily use or understand the phrase "I am right" to mean "what I have said is true." The countryman is explaining his economic acts in their traditional family setting as part of the reciproci-

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ties of act, sentiment, and obligation which make up family relationships.

That he is doing so becomes evident when we find that the habitual, obligatorily performed acts toward extended relatives are similarly described, where the context is definitely not economic nor connected with agricultural labor. Thus in the townland where we examined agricultural coöperation there takes place the same lending of a boy or girl and the giving of a hand in aid at such festivals of social and family life as weddings, christenings, wakes, and funerals.

This aid is felt to be the same category. Thus one farmer speaking of another, his second cousin, could say:

> He is the best friend we ever had; we can make bold on him. When the children were little and our cow died on us, Johnny sent down a cow and calf worth twelve pounds to us and didn't want anything for it.

And in more general terms, another farmer could explain:

> Everybody's friends in the country here are very good to you. They lend you a horse with the hay or a boy going to the fair, or they send down to know if they can help when somebody dies with you.

Thus it is part of the "friendliness" for the relatives to make up and serve the food at wakes and weddings, to dig the grave for the dead, and to keen (wail) over the dead. The obligatory character and something of the reciprocities involved in such behavior are well expressed by one countryman who gave as his reason for going to a funeral (at a time when he was needed at home for farm work): "I have right to go (to the funeral of a second cousin); they always come over to this side."

Likewise, when in Luogh a man's wife died and his sister took over the child, she was praised for doing the "friendly" thing which she "had right" to do. In the very same terms a

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man called upon his brother-in-law to lend him his son to help drive his cattle to the fair. In a case similar to the last, a violent quarrel arose because an uncle, who "had right" to lend a son badly needed in doing some fence work, refused to do so. And in the same scale of value a family which did not attend the funeral of a relative was subjected to great criticism for being "unfriendly."

In fact, failure to fulfill the pattern of conduct demanded by extended family obligations leads often to punitive action on the part of the aggrieved party. Near R— a small farmer, who neglected his garden and forced his father-in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support, was finally beaten up one night in his own house by the irate in-laws. Ordinarily, of course, failure to fulfill such obligations either in directly social situations or in agricultural coöperation does not lead to such violent conflict, but rather to an estrangement. The niggardly "friend," especially the one who refuses or fails to return an obligation, is held up to general condemnation, not only by his kindred but by the whole community. The position of a small farmer near but not in Luogh was the result of such failure. He was regarded by all his neighbors and kindred as a "miser" and a "Jew" and on several occasions was accused of petty thefts by them, which perpetuated the breach. As a result he lived as a recluse, refusing even to visit others; in return he was not greeted by his "friends."

The obligations of this sort[2] extend to visiting and to the hospitality which the Irish countryman deems so great a virtue. "A sup of tea" and such food as eggs and bread is

[2] The word *cóir* (a fit and traditional right or duty) corresponds almost exactly with the full range of the small farmer's obligations, as we have seen. It well reflects the farmer's habit in two other uses. The phrase *cóir mhaith* means good food. When the speaker says, *tá cóir mhaith agam ansud* (there's a good feed for me there), he refers not so much to the food itself as to the social situation in which he finds himself well provided for. And the term of address, *duine cóir* (worthy fellow), indicates that "worthiness" springs from a fit observance of one's obligations.

Glanquin Mountain and the hills of Burren beyond. Along it one passes through ragged upland for a mile and a half. This is Kilnaboy Commons, and its many small fields bear witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted, laboriously cleared of stones. The upland is not high. It merely gives rise enough to start a half mile of gentle slope downward into a basin filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round the lake.

The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with limestone ridges. But the grass grows richly among the crags and ridges. The farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the lake shore. This is Rynamona village. Five others are scattered through the fields and across the lake. These households and a few more a little further off make up the community. These are small farms of the kind we met in Luogh. No one has more than nine cows; and only one has fewer than two. Except for the eight houses huddled in the village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard gate. In the case of the villagers' holdings, the arrangement is not much different. Their fields are scattered about and behind their haggards in irregular patterns. In addition to these fields, most of them have several acres, carved out for them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles off.

Rynamona is a closely knit community. Reduplicated bonds of kinship unite all the households. "We are all related one way or another," they describe it. Cooring is the usual form of coöperation, and the village as a whole holds itself responsible amid grumbles for the maintenance of the borheen (road) which leads out to the outside world of the towns. Nowadays the County Council pays the sons who break stones and lay them in the winter months, but the village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder. Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of

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of labor of a non-agricultural character as still persists in the country communities is very simple. Yet it is an interesting part of community life. It affords status to local artisans in the lives of the small farmers.

The families upon the separate farms are not, of course, entirely self-dependent units. We have already had occasion to examine the kind of coöperation called cooring, often based upon the extended family which flourishes in the country districts. Such reciprocal aids in ordinary farm work are only one part of the fabric of services which one meets among the country people. Another part can be distinguished. It takes account of what elementary specialization in local techniques and handicrafts exists. The man or woman skilled in some particular branch of work is called the "handy man." The handy man is an important person at the times when his or her special skill comes into use. The local reputation of such a specialist is sufficient to keep the recognition of his skill alive between periods of use and to afford him a definite status. In the country districts of Clare even full-fledged artisans, appearing in census records as full-time carpenters, smiths, and the like, sons of fathers and grandfathers who followed the same trade, are not much more than local specialists.

Many a farmer is still a jack-of-all-trades, ready if need be to turn his hand to shoeing his horse or resoling a boot or building himself a house. Only where the products of factory and foundry have become deeply entrenched in farm life, embodying skills of distant workers abroad, do local goods and services represent techniques the small farmer cannot come close to emulating. For example, the smelting of iron is a process completely unknown, and neither the local blacksmith nor the farmer can do more than rework the iron they have at hand. But the blacksmith and the farmer both can do it, though it is the blacksmith who has the greater skill. In the countryside the techniques and the

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463 The country people distinguish between these men who are handy men and have had no formal induction into their trade and those who are legally recognized as "tradesmen." But the line of formal distinction is thin, and more recognized in the abstract than in the concrete. Thus in the story of the development of one local mason, one can see that the difference lies rather more in the kind of remuneration than anything else. One farmer's account of the "tradesmen" of his knowledge led him on as follows:

> There are other men who are carpenters and masons who are handy men, but they usually work for pay because the job might take several days, and no neighbor could stay away from his work with a friend for that length of time. Donovan is a mason and he taught himself. He built his own house and several others. A man cannot build a house because he would not know how to do it. Donovan is a very intelligent man. He has a terrible head on him.

437 That the difference of remuneration is seized upon by
●476 countrymen as the distinguishing mark came to the authors'
463 notice again and again. The handy man is the local resident
465 who fits into the local pattern of courtesies, barter, gifts, as in the case of the butcher, described above, who got his reward in the shape of the meat shoved under his arm. In cooring, of course, one never pays. In any act of "friendship" and alliance in a familistic setting no formal remuneration of monetary payment is ever present. We have already seen that it is only at the crucial period of family reorganization, when the whole system of relations between members undergoes change, that any considerations of money enter the schedule of rural services and rewards. The same absence of money payment is the point of distinction here. It distinguishes the relations between the men of a local community and one of themselves who is "handy" through special experience from those between formal client and tradesman. Money payment is the mark of the outsider;

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gift and barter that of the fellow in the local community.*

For example, O'Sullivan, the "vet" of Rynamona, already mentioned, was a herdsman who did his cattle doctoring in his spare time. His services were always at the call of his neighbors. He seems to have been fairly good at his practice. He was quite widely sought after. His interest led him even to an experimental turn of mind. He said he often cut up cattle to see what killed them. In every description of him given by his neighbors they insisted he never took a penny for his work.

The many bonesetters, whose help is much sought after, reject payment too. They are so numerous that a local dispensary doctor in Clare could complain that he had never been trusted to set a fracture but was consulted only to make sure a fracture had occurred. Even townsmen always emphasized in justification of local custom that the bonesetter accepted no money. Legal requirement has something to do with it. Statutes protecting legitimate doctors and veterinarians from this sort of competition exist and can be invoked, but that is only part of the story. The greater part of the matter lies here: The handy man is part of the local community. He is one of the farmers who has specialized, and thus he is within the pattern of reciprocal services and mutual aid.

Such a figure as the blacksmith, who follows a recognized trade, and is paid for it accordingly, distinguishes carefully between the services for which money payment is possible and those which cannot be so remunerated. In the following case we can see that he distinguishes nicely in this tact indeed, for he can be paid in other communities for services for which he cannot accept payment at home. A blacksmith in North Clare is telling of himself in paraphrase:

* Weavers, carpenters, thatchers, and masons may, of course, receive payment for their work, and do so. But such payment is made usually either where a farmer is in no position to return favors or does not want to enter a permanent relationship of cooring. The methods are alternatives.

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wife got her reward in presents, gifts, and whiskey, but not in money. Money, however, would be proferred to the nurse.

That the factor of payment in money should be crucial is really the cloak of the set of dispositions arising from habitual relations. In the local community the handy man is not paid, since, like "friends" and neighbors, he is one of themselves. Since he is one of the countrymen, he is caught within the system of much the same habitual relations of reciprocal service and mutual aid which make up cooring in agriculture. 463 465 571

To see this point, we must describe the action of the local community in respect to the work to be done once again. Cooring is a form of reciprocal exchange of goods and services. One old fellow described it aptly when he said that it meant that for a day of work given you would receive a day in return. We have already seen its connection with familism and the extended family. But besides cooring, there was another form of the custom known as *meitheal* (mihil). The word *comhair* (coor) referred to the reciprocity, the word *meitheal* to the band of men and teams acting together to perform a task. On various occasions when work beyond the capacity of cooring families was to be done, a *meitheal* of men or women or horses could be made up. 476 571

As described by the old people who still remember its heyday, the *meitheal* rested on a foundation slightly different from the reciprocity of cooring. The work was done by a gang of local persons got up for the purpose through the wish and custom of the local inhabitants, but without expectancy of individual return in like measure.

Bands of men and women were got up in rural communities by *meitheal* for the following purposes, of which the authors heard record:

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1. Mowing and harvesting for priest and school teacher.
2. Mowing and harvesting for an old couple without children who could not do it themselves.
3. Hauling and moving where many horses were needed, as a *meitheal* of horses, for bringing sand or seaweed manure from the coast, or moving and re-settling a family.
4. Rebuilding a house and re-settling an evicted family.
5. Collecting a *meitheal* of girls with their spinning wheels from all the community's houses to spin after shearing.
6. Collecting a *meitheal* of men and girls for various processes connected with the conversion of flax to linen.

There were probably many other more extraordinary kinds of coöperative action. But the above list exhausts those which are remembered by the local communities the authors knew in Clare and which are unconnected with the more directly reciprocal and familistic pattern of cooring. The difference between *meitheal* and *comhair* was not a contrast, however, by any means. The term *meitheal*, applied strictly, referred to the band of persons and their tools got together. Yet there was a certain unanimity in the country people's feeling that the word *meitheal* should be reserved specifically for occasions of the local community's communal action. In *meitheal* work no individual or family expected a like return.

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Community action in concert, in which bands of workers are got up for specific purposes, is nowadays very different. Most of the characteristic actions of *meitheal* remembered by the old people are no longer carried out. Just as in the case of cooring, the need of the small farmer for his fellows is no longer so great. Monetary hire is spreading into the country communities. Yet even today the schoolteacher and the priest are donated services at hay harvesting occasionally, though nowadays schoolteacher and priest rely no longer upon bits of land and garden for support but upon fixed monetary salaries from state or church. Such aid is of little importance in their economies. Likewise, old-age

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pensions and other benefits have removed the necessity of action by *meitheal* for the support of the aged and childless. General prosperity and the spread of machinery and tools have made it unnecessary for such concerted action in other cases, and local self-sufficiency is no longer so complete.

Nevertheless, the foundation of mutual relations between members of the local community upon which *meitheal* was based still exists. It can be called into play in emergency or under special circumstance still. Not all the townsman's accusation that the spirit of self-help and self-sufficiency has gone out of the country people is true by any means. They still will buckle to a community task, if necessity forces action, quite willingly. But they have learned that they have a voice nowadays in the kind of activity to which public funds and public works shall be put. This awareness is part of the extension inward into the community of the lines of relationship with persons and institutions external to the farm community which is so characteristic of the age. Such relationships are now made use of where before there were none of them beyond appeal to a landlord.

Some description of the former kind of activity might be of interest here, though it is in the nature of a digression. The techniques of the last century, particularly those of wool and flax, were different from those of today; yet the situation is in other respects quite like that of today as far as the organization of persons in the community is concerned. The age groups of old and young, the sex division of activity between men and women, and the reciprocities between family groups and the direction of the community in the hands of the old men were even more marked than they are today. But nothing fundamental has changed except the techniques.

The following is an account of the older custom in weaving:

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476 571 248 A man would go to town and buy two or more pottles of flax to sow. Then on the first of May he would go to the garden and plant it. In August he would pull it up by the roots and lay it in small bundles to be made into stooks. Then they would take it and put it into a bog and leave it there fifteen or twenty days, after which they could dry it in the house by hanging it from the rafters. About the first of November you would take it down and some men would come in and help break it. They would then put it back and later take it down and scutch it with a pronged tool, drawing the flax over it and breaking it.

476 571 283 Some time about Christmas time you would have a *meitheal* of girls come in and they would sit in a semicircle round the fire and clove the flax. It would take several days depending on how much you had. The girls would stay with you all that time. At seven in the evening they would be through and within half an hour you could hear them in the hills leaping and shouting. About eight or eight-thirty the boys would begin [535] to arrive and there would be a dance and be no more good out of them for that night. They might have a dance every two or three days. You fed them good.

The next thing was the hackling, and this might be done by men or women. You had a box with iron prongs sticking up and you would hit the stalk against the irons and the small particles would fall into the box below. It might take several nights. Old man Roughan was a great man at the hackling, but he was always great for nothing else to do with flax. It was fine if you got him to come and help you and he would be glad to do it. Then you might be good at something else and you would go and help him with that. Some men were good at one thing and others at something else and they would help each other.

After this the next thing was the spinning, and this was done by the woman. She would sit in this corner by the fire and she might be there every night, or whenever she had the time, spinning the flax fiber into thread. She had no one to help her and it was a hard job. After it was made into thread, it would be taken out and bleached and re-wound and then taken to the [286] weaver. The weaver made it into cloth and you would use it for sheets and shirts and other things. Flax was a hard thing and there was a lot of hard work about it.

248 They have been out of growing it for thirty or forty years

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and now they would never think of growing it but must be running to town and buying what they want.

The process of conversion of wool to yarn and thence into cloth was equally difficult. It demanded the concerted efforts of most of the rural community. It gave scope for the development of specialists who could give their skills back and forth even though, as before, their skills were part of the equipment of all the young people in the community. Two other old fellows of Inagh combined in the following account:

> With the wool it was sheared on May 15 and, if that fell on a Monday or Tuesday and the following was Saturday in town (market day) you would see the men there with wool to sell while others would be there to buy it with large baskets in which to put it. The first thing was to card the wool. About the first of June you would get ready to spin it. For that you go around to all the neighbors and ask for a loan of a girl to spin the wool, and if you got eight or ten you must get the loan of that many spinning wheels. Then they come to the house on a certain day and I have seen eight wheels in this room and two in the other, all the girls spinning and talking away. It might take several days before they were through and they would have a dance and the boys would come around. You want to be sure to get the girls early for there is a great demand for them. After the yarn is spun, it is placed on the wall to be taken to the weaver later on.

All this was part of the pattern of work in which the members of the community were accustomed to work in close association. The behavior described here is that which we have already looked at in the discussion of the obligations of cooring. The *meitheal* referred to the working gang rather than the system in which the local habits were set. That setting was a constant play of habitual work relations between the "friends" and neighbors of the local community in which the characteristic organization of the community aligned sex and age groups and associated the

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skills of individual experience and prowess with one's place in such groups.

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In dealing with local techniques and local specializations, it is impossible to divorce them from this social setting. The attitudes of the country people support this view. Their emotional outlook on work gives added proof of the identity between work role and the social relations it involves. Solitary work is difficult and tedious. It offers little incentive. Communal effort on the other hand has a pleasant and variegated rhythm which works up an emotional satisfaction which can counteract fatigue and monotony.

Consequently, concerted effort and hard work are not often divorced in the minds of the country people, to judge from what they say of it, from their experience of the *esprit de corps* which they feel. The old people as usual deny any value to present-day activity. The young think the doings of an older day the behavior of savages. We have already seen how the attitudes which express one's age status color one's view of life in the countryside. That is the case again here. If the old people deny the existence of community effort today, it is because they think of the zest of working in unison in youth long ago and remember the times when emotion was highest and the solidarity of communal effort greatest. And the young people forget this. Listening to the accounts of such mighty effort, they think only of the hardship and the ignorance of labor-saving short-cuts it entailed. Similarly the old people forget or fail to see that the young people go through the same experience as they once did.

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Thus one can hear such a description of communal effort and the joys of work in common as follows from the old people and at the same time one can still watch a harvest where coöperative action and competition in skills is just as great. And we can know that the essential patterns are the same, though the techniques may change:

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And at the time of the saving of the hay and up to the War didn't it used to be that a man's place was done in turn and there would be fifteen or twenty men working at a time on the one place. There would be one man make the hayrick and there were no round ricks in it then, they were all long. There would be another who would rack it and two above on the rick putting hay into it. The other men and women would be in the fields bringing the hay in on their backs, and the children would be there too. Each would do as much as he could. Then the man whose field it was would have half a barrel of porter and the men would all drink. At noon and in the evening the neighboring women would come in and spread a great feed with jam and sweet breads and other things out of the ordinary, and in the evening there would be a tea for all of them in the fields.

Then at the cutting of the turf the man might have porter, though the hay saving was a bigger time than the turf cutting. There would be several working together at the cutting of the turf, some cutting and others laying it out, and they would be given a feed and some drink for it. There was a man who agreed to cut turf for a widow woman who had several small children. After he arrived, he was sorry he came, for there was no one to lay out the turf for him. But the widow and children were there and worked all day and never a sod did he get ahead of them. As soon as he had one cut, there was a child there to carry it away.

The people also helped each other with the ploughing and the planting of the garden, several men working to help and be called. There was one woman who would help one neighbor today and another the next and so on. It would kill you if you had to do it alone but you never feel the work when there are several of you all working.

There is none of that today. Everyone is begrudging the other if he manages to get along tolerably well and each man does his own. Then the women used to work together. They had what they called a *meitheal*. On an appointed evening all the girls would gather at the house and work on the flax, scutching it, and they might be there for several days or a week working and living in the same house until all the work was done. Then they might go to another house and stay there. We had a great fortnight long ago at the Murphys here. The young men

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476 would be waiting outside to whisk them away or to have a dance.
571 Then when they ground the oats, they had a quern and the men and women would come together and each take a turn at grinding so it was not tiring and they would have a big supper of spuds and milk for all of them before they would go. Then they would get together for the carding and spinning before the thread was taken to the weaver. The young women might be carding and the old women spinning and the *meitheal* of
[535] girls would work away. They would get a dance when they would be done.

All the above description of close concert and deeply imprinted habitual work relations among the members of the local communities in the framework of the organization of behaviors of age and sex depict the now dead past. The same activities today, though certain techniques are different, bring out the same picture of work relations in an emotionally charged unison among persons of similar status within the community. The present-day hay harvest is very little different, though mowing machines are used. The great hayrick is still built in the same setting, and still calls for celebration. Everyone still waits for a signal from the hayrick rigger, a personage of considerable importance on such a day.

476 The unison of working on oats harvest with flails is gone.
571 But in its place is a threshing machine, and its owners come around and a local crew is got up out of the local men. The
463 same jollities still reign. In all this our chief interest is not
554 in changing custom. Rather it is from this kind of observation that a new conclusion arises. The factors of differentiation about skills and techniques in the rural communities give rise to statuses of the same kind as before, statuses based upon the development of a specialty by a member of the local community which is recognized and valued within the habitual activities of his fellows. Here is an opportunity to see the embryonic form of division of labor and development of occupations in terms of the life of a community. It is a continuous process.

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463 in terms of such considerations as income, wealth, or skill,
571 or any such factors, but in terms of the place and function of the persons specializing among their fellows. It can be understood in terms of social relations and the organization of habit. Status based upon technical differentiation is built up out of personal relations in the work experience of the community members.

476 If then we take inventory of the kinds of goods and ob-
571 jects which make up the *matériel* of peasant life, and draw
621 up such an inventory to illustrate for us the connection between social relations and these goods and objects, we can construct a series of charts which connect community life and the exchanges and uses of goods, services, and objects in one comprehensive view.

In such a chart those goods and services which come to the farmer from those within his own community come to him in connection with traditional social relations uniting fellow community members. They are the ones transferred under the pattern of cooring: through "friendliness" and non-monetary reciprocal obligation.

Those goods and services which come to the farmer and his family from without the community come to him in connection with more recently developed non-traditional relations uniting him to persons outside the community. They fall into quite different patterns of activity. Likewise any person whose occupation makes him both a member of the local community and part of the outside world, by virtue of his relations extending beyond, is also in a position of oscillation between the first and the second relationships.

For there is a continual attempt to extend the pattern of cooring, as with all local familistic and communal obligation and sentiment, outward on the part of the farmers, and a continual extension inward on the part of outsiders of other patterns of relationship. Much of the enduring pattern of town and country relationship evolved in Irish

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society hinges on this point. Much of political life is explained here. Gifts and personal favors, fashioned on the pattern of the extended family and local community, besiege (or used to besiege) magistrates and government officials. Before land reform they besieged such links with the outer world as the older estate system provided, such as the bog warden, the land steward, and the other functionaries of landlords. Yet against this pattern's sway there runs a continual incursion of other patterns which the institutions extending their sway from town life and higher social classes downward provide. In this meeting and conflict of social patterns much is to be learned of the structure of Irish social classes and of the continuing course of Irish social life.

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The matter is of interest here only as a summary of the life of the rural community itself. It occupies us only in so far as it points to a conclusion about the kinds of relationship which build up within the local community between the farmers and those of their fellows who are not farmers. There is always a primary distinction among them. There are those who have, quantitatively speaking, most of their activities taken up in relations within the local community alone, and there are those who are divided between the local community and the outside world and who make a bridge between. The former fall in one way or another into the pattern of cooring. They are a "cut below" the farmer, yet his intimates. They are the ones in relation to whom the farmer is the dominant party, since it is the farmer who commissions, hires, or otherwise sets off the other's activity, expert as it may be. The secret of the equivalence of the status of these persons with that of the landless boys lies in these facts. For the boys are in exactly the same case.

The others, however, who are in one way or another part of the outside world, are alike if only in that. Various as they are, they are never in the same case as the local handy

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TABLE 7

Relations of Farmers and Non-Farmers in Three Rural Communities in County Clare

The table which follows is a chart of relationships between farmers and non-farmers in the rural communities of Clare. It lists those of different skill or habit with whom the farmers have relations. Those who fall under the pattern of reciprocities, gifts, and cooring, and the goods and services they provide the farmer, appear in one list. Those who fall under other patterns, who do not figure in the obligations of cooring, are listed in another. At the right of each item in each list is a word or phrase characterizing the initiation of the actions taking place between the farmer and the non-farmer in the course of the provision of the goods or services described.

Read another way, the lists arrange in two groups all the local specialists with whom we have been dealing. They show us that the differences are to be found in social relations, not in goods or services rendered or any other factor. All the specialists of whom the authors got information in the country districts are here. The first list describes the specialists whose relations to the farmers are "internal" to the community. The second list describes those persons who connect the farmers with the outside world and are thus "external." List I gives those who enjoy superior prestige and local standing, whose contacts with the community proceed through the heads of families, the adult men, and who are capable of initiating action among them. In that limited sense only, they are dominant over the farmers and make a higher class. List II gives those who share inferior prestige and local standing, who form cliques with the "boys," and who are not ordinarily capable of initiating action among the adult members of the community except in a course of communal action employing their special skill. These are a lower class in the country districts by such definition.

This configuration of factors reveals the lines of relationship within the community and those extending outward from it.

The reader may judge for himself how close the connection is between the familistic system of farm life and the structure of the rural community.

[p. 675]

List I

Extra-Familial Relations within the Local Communities, Internal

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations [1]	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services [2]
Weavers	Homespuns, shawls, cloths, blankets		
Tailors	Clothing		
Carpenters	Furniture, houses, buildings		

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, in each case this consists of gifts and cooring.
[2] Unless otherwise indicated, in each case the farmer commissions the labor.

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TABLE 7 *(continued)*

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Smiths	Farm implements, horseshoes, tools, repairs	Gifts, annual payment, and cooring	
Shoemakers	Boots, shoes		
Thatchers	House thatching		
Hayrick experts	Hayrick building		
Masons	House building, sheds, walls		
Wall builders	Walls		
Whitewashers	Limewashing of houses, sheds		
Water diviners and well diggers	Finding and building of wells		
Threshing-machine operators, owners	Threshing	Payment, gifts and cooring	Farmer commissions labor and machine and pays hire
Midwives	Attendance at childbirth		
Bonesetters	Broken bones		
Local "vets"	Treatment of sick animals		
Local "doctors," wise men or women	Treatment of sick; magic		
Domestic servants	Household aid	Wages only for outsiders not kin	Farmer hires and pays hire, otherwise kinship relations hold
Agricultural laborers, employees of big farmers	Occasional aid in agriculture		Either party requests aid
Gravekeepers	Records of grave locations, tending of graves	Wages by priest, gifts and cooring from farmers	Unobserved
Slate quarrymen	Building and roofing slates	Unobserved	Unobserved
Sextons	Tending of churches	Wages by priest	Unobserved
Limekiln and lime burners	Fertilizer	Gifts and cooring from local men, payment for outsiders	Unobserved

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List II

Extra-Familial Relations with Local Persons Extending Outside the Local Communities, External

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Special Cases, Occasional Relationship			
Tinkers	Asses, pots, pans, repairs	Occasional trade at the door	Tinker makes rounds
Dealers, hawkers, feathermongers	Odds and ends, small trade articles. Feather mongers buy feathers from farmers	Occasional trade at the door	Dealer makes rounds
Habitual Relationships			
Crossroad shopkeeper	Supplies liquors, foodstuffs, tobacco, sundries not bought in town. (Most trading of staples done in towns, however.) Collects eggs and butter for sale to produce dealers	Farmer an habitual client, purchasing on long-term credit. Relationship overlaid with obligations of "friendliness," involving reciprocal gifts and occasional advances. Barter significant only in the shopkeepers' acting as depot for eggs and butter sales	Relationship habitual over long term (see other columns)
Civic guards, (police) officials and uniformed men (*Gardaí Siochána*)	Local protection of person and property, apprehension and prosecution of misdemeanor and felony. Informally, police settle disputes, report grievances, give amateur legal advice, and gather census data for governmental departments	By law, civic guards must be neither members of the communities in which they are stationed nor related in it by marriage. They are instructed to maintain close rapport and very friendly relations with local people, and seem to succeed. They go in for much sport with the local young men and boys. They are attached to local barracks but, if they are married, maintain homes in the local community	Assigned to stations on departmental orders

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Agricultural instructors, horticultural instructors, poultry instructresses, etc. Permanent officials, employees of local authority, county councils, and members of government departments	Instruction and demonstration through experimental plots, prize contests and schemes, assignment of grants, evening lectures, etc.	Agricultural instructors of all kinds make home visits and hold classes locally but have large districts and are often townsmen. Informal contact with farmers slight	Instructor either pays a visit of inquiry or is called upon by the farmer for his advice and aid; farmers make inquiries at central offices
Land commission officials and staff	Division and regulation of land holdings provided by land law in breaking up former large estates, often affording occasional employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Land commission proceeds officially to estate division; farmers petition for increase of holdings at local offices
Commission of Public Works officials and staff	Provision of public works and relief works in connection with drainage, conservation, government projects, supplying occasional local employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Public works commission proceeds officially to put a project into effect
Local government authority, County Council, officials and staff:			
a. Rate collectors	Collection of rates, taxes, land annuities	Make collections in person, most frequently at farmer's house, though also by post. Usually owe jobs to local influence and are most often of the farming class, but collections are large and contacts not wide	Rate collection proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
b. Road engineers, foremen, overseers and staff	Maintenance of roads through direct labor or through contracts with the farmers for supply of local quarry stone or paving materials. Relief work and road building an important source of employment of young men	Permanent officials employees of the local authorities, the County Council; foremen, overseers, and "gangers" often chosen from the farming community; much local influence exerted through county councillors	Road work proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council
c. County councillors	Local political representatives on local authority. In practice present local needs, wishes, and grievances, smooth the local administration of governmental bodies, and carry out the official duties of the County Council, not delegated to permanent staff	Elected by voters of rural electoral districts through universal suffrage of all citizens over thirty years of age (1935) in periodic local government elections. Have very often been crossroad shopkeepers or influential local big farmers; nowadays, however, are often small farmers as well. Depend for election upon canvassing, personal contacts, and attention to constitutents' business, though political party endorsement is not unimportant	
d. County Board of Health, officials and staff, local dispensary doctors, nurses, and home assistance (relief) officers	Investigation and report of cases in need of assistance, relief, etc., and provision of same	Employees or appointees of local authority; usually townsmen, and not members of the local community. Their duties, however, demand that they maintain friendly contact and acquire considerable local information	Farmers petition Board of Health or County Council or apply at dispensaries

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Big farmer	Occasional employment of local young men; occasional aid to small farmers and local purchase of corn, vegetables, animals, produce	Of a higher class and wider contacts than the small farmers; most often a townsman by culture and even by residence. In the countryside, close informal contacts with others of his kind over a wide area; interest in fashionable recreation and sport. Contacts with *small farmers often* friendly but usually few, except where big farmer is active politically	
Cattle and produce dealers	Purchase of produce and livestock, providing chief monetary income of small farmers	When not townsmen, whom the farmer meets only at periodic fairs and markets, these men are usually big farmers. Buy "from the land" (that is, from individual farmers not gathered at the local fairs and markets) very rarely; butter and egg dealers nearly always buy through crossroads shopkeepers	

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Parish priest and curate and other clergy	Religious leadership and moral control. Regulation of personal conduct and family behavior. Settlement of conflicts and disputes. Recommendation of "characters" before the outside world. Regulation of formal beliefs and attitudes, supervision of education in the interests of the accepted *mores*. Priest supplies ceremonial and cultural leadership and takes an active part in nearly all recreational and cultural activity, along with the schoolteacher, in country parishes. Only at times of high ceremony or special devotion, as at marriages, or in pilgrimages and retreats, does the small farmer make use of town churches, though he and his wife often contribute to them	In country districts today formal religious relationship seems to be superseding older paternalistic dominance of parish priest. Little informal contact except in the case of young curates in local sport. But the priest still commands greatest respect and reverence and, in many cases, the love of his parishioners. He is still the local court of appeal and the arbiter of local custom. He is consulted a great deal by both men and women. His parishioners are jealous lest he overstep his sphere of authority, particularly in politics, yet they concur in granting him obedience in everything else. Nevertheless the older magical power he possessed once is gone. Today he is often superior to the small farmers in wealth and education, and is not one of them. His more usual associates are other clergy, big farmers, and townsmen	

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593 589 nephew for amusement. Where a widower had a small son, the son was taken by a childless sister. She brought him up to inherit her husband's farm, and her brother might marry again. Two spinsters spent their lives on a farm worked by their cousins.

To the country-people, such arrangements, successful enough economically sometimes, are makeshifts, subjects for commiseration. One hears often enough such phrases as these: "It's a hard life she has with only the brother and no husband to help her." "He's all by himself with only his son there on the land, poor fellow." Even government [656] officials nowadays recognize the social value of the full family. A household of father, mother and sons gets preference in land division. The work to be done is the strengthening of the social group; personal enrichment and use of the soil are merely incidental.

476 593 Up to this point, I have described the countryman as though he worked in isolation from his fellows. In a measure this is true, for his first duties are to his immediate family. Still, there is a great deal of work which goes on between farms. There is a certain amount of co-operation of an informal kind. Work in the countryside is permeated with a give-and-take of reciprocal aids.

476 Co-operation of this sort takes many forms. Men lend tools, or work with tools of their own for 'friends' and neighbours, particularly at mowing,

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spring sowing, harrowing, ploughing. They send along a boy to help whenever the farm needs an extra hand to get its work done quickly. Women pool resources in making up a tub or firkin of butter or they lend a girl to a short-handed household. 'Friends' and neighbours help one another at times of distress, or when a household is short or a crop delayed. Gifts of cattle, food and labour are made. Or they work together communally, particularly at turf-cutting, oats harvest and threshing. Here again much of the actual work is done by the 'boys' lent by their fathers, though the latter take a hand when necessary. Lastly, there is a great deal of aid given and received in preparing for ceremonial and social occasions, at christenings, weddings and funerals.

Once this co-operation was more widespread. Older people remember the days when "once if you had a horse and car you'd have forty or fifty people helping you with the turf". Before mowing-machines came in, ten or a dozen 'friends' would work each other's meadows in turn with the scythe. In that way the slender resources of the countrymen were pooled; and the work of life went forward. Nowadays, the small farmer is better off; he has less immediate need of his fellows. Nevertheless, he has not forgotten them; in all but the communities where large farmers have forsaken peasant life for a monetary agriculture, he can and does rely upon them still. Nowadays, however, the

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476 co-operating groups are smaller; tools are more modern and better distributed; resources are fuller.

246 476 Lending a 'boy' is the commonest form of co-operation. It goes on constantly, but can best be described in a scene of great activity, such as hay-making. I met it first there, in Luogh, the townland in which we found the 'west room'. The hay was early in Luogh in 1933. Harvest began in mid-July. The weather was just right. Warm dry days had brought the grasses to maturity, and gave promise of continuing. The families of Luogh set to work to 'save the hay': mowing it, letting it dry as it lay, and then stacking it, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six- to eight-foot hay-cocks. Later, after several weeks, it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. Now it was a question of mowing, drying and stacking it before rains caught the farmers in mid-course.

[521] There was much interest in every family's progress. The weather and the yields of the meadows drove all other subjects out of conversation. The men felt spurred to work well and quickly; there was a general rivalry in the air. The women were as eager, and brought their children to the meadow's edge, while they worked with their rakes behind the mowers.

About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows, working from earliest morning as long as

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light held. They worked with the aid of their sons and of boys from the families who had no machines. At each stage of the process a boy not a member of the family gave his labour; he took his place at meals during the day.

His own mowing done, the farmer paid his debt. He took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed that man's meadow. In one instance, a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others. In another, a farmer mowed for two others. Certain meadows in Luogh were full-handed enough to do without extra hands; but in five cases, though mowing and stacking took a very long time and they were obviously short of hands, no help was given. Two of these cases were bachelors, who lived alone; two more were 'strangers'.

Here was an important agricultural operation undertaken by the small local community in which provision was made for effective co-operation over and above the usual family economy. It was no isolated instance; it is immemorial practice in Luogh. In fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work.

There was no monetary payment involved in this work. In the country surrounding Luogh, the only hired labour to be seen worked the meadows of a large farmer, a cattleman with over 300 acres. He did not co-operate; in fact, his whole life was cut out of a different cloth.

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476 602 This co-operation is woven deeply into the countryman's habit and sentiment. Questioning in the life of the present soon brought out the base upon which it rests. In every case an extended-family relationship was involved. The countryman is a family man in this co-operation with his fellows, as well as in his work at home. Carey, who mowed for Denis and Seamus Moloney and for Brian MacMahon, was second cousin to each of them. Peter Barrett was first cousin and uncle respectively to the two farmers whose meadows he mowed. The 'boys' who worked Carey's and Barrett's meadows were also relatives; they were sons of the kinsmen for whom Carey and Barrett had mowed.

So it went over the townland. No man had mowed for all his relatives, that was not necessary. One man had mowed not for a relative, but for a boon companion. Furthermore, the bachelors, whom no one had helped, had been able to help no one. The two 'strangers', who had moved into the [609] townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives 'on this side'.

The small farmers of Luogh explained their co-operation in their own general terms. They call it 'cooring' in the brogue. The word is the Irish *comh-air*, meaning aid, partnership, and alliance. They explained their 'cooring' in terms of the 'friendliness' of the place. Their answer was that they "had right to help their friends", or in a more general

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statement, "country people do be very friendly, they always help one another".

Now, 'have right' and 'friend' are both expressions in the brogue. Like so much of that rich English dialect, for it is a true dialect with an ancient history, both words translate Gaelic idiom. A 'friend' is a relative. To 'have right' expresses an obligation, a duty and the traditional fitness of an act. It is an anglicization of an Irish *tá cóir orm*, 'the obligation is on me'. The countryman is explaining his acts as part of the traditional reciprocities of sentiment and duty which make up his system of kinship.

This fact strikes one the more strongly when one finds him describing other traditional acts of obligation to kindred in exactly the same terms. Aid lent and duties performed at wedding and funeral are felt to be in the same category as co-operation in farming. Thus a farmer of my acquaintance could say of a cousin: "He is the best friend we ever had; we can make bold on him. Johnny sent down a cow and calf worth £12 to us and didn't want anything for it." And he could go on in more general terms: "Everybody's friends in the country here are very good to you; they lend you a horse with the hay, or a boy going to the fair, or they send down to help when somebody dies with you". It is part of the 'friendliness' owed one's kinsmen to make up and serve food at wakes and weddings, to dig the grave, to carry the coffin, to

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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476 602 keen over the dead. This conduct is reciprocal; 'friendliness' implies mutual obligation. One countryman gave me as his reason for going to the funeral of a second cousin: "I have right to go, they always come over to this side". When in Luogh a man's wife died and his sister took over the child, she did the 'friendly' thing that she 'had right to do'. In the very same terms a man 'made bold' upon his brother-in-law to lend him a son to help drive cattle to the fair, as the brother-in-law 'had right' to do.

In fact, failure to fulfil the pattern of conduct demanded by the obligations of 'friendliness' may bring punitive action on the part of the aggrieved kindred. We have seen this before in the story of the 'old man's curse' in the first lecture. In a part of Clare, not many miles from Luogh, a small farmer neglected his garden and forced his father-[578] in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support. He was finally beaten up one night in his own house by his irate in-laws. Ordinarily, perhaps [626] failure leads rather to an estrangement; it holds one up to general condemnation by the whole community. Persistence in failure leads to social death; the recluse is greeted by no one, not even his 'friends'.

574 602 But fulfilment entrenches one in social life. The obligations extend to visiting and hospitality, the countryman's great virtue. 'A sup of tea' is 'put down before' the countryman who is travelling to

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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people together. Seasonal festivals celebrating the major operations of the agricultural calendar are a primary part of peasant life: thus spring and autumn were the main fair seasons. In the licence permitted at these gatherings we may detect an echo of the ritual of fertility magic designed to ensure the success of seedtime and harvest.

Sympathetic magic, already present in the minds of the cave-artists of the Old Stone Age, who painted life-like pictures of animals in the hope of good hunting, may be defined as the symbolic carrying out of certain deeds in order to promote success in another field of action. A peasant community is fully conscious of its dependence on the powers that bring rain and sunshine: these powers must be conciliated and encouraged. In the face of the untamed ocean in particular, man's superstitious regard for the menace of nature dies hard, while the survival of wakes for the dead, of the veneration of trees, wells and standing stones, of customs concerning cattle and fire, is a lasting tribute to the power of magic.

From the sociological view-point the idea of sympathetic magic has had an important consequence in the tendency, common to all peasantries, to regard child-bearing as part of the ritual necessary to bring success in cultivation. The large families of rural Ireland are one aspect of this; another is the ill-omen attached to unmarried women. Barrenness tends to be regarded as a curse and a disgrace. But the years since the famine have seen great changes in the ages of marriage—the average of 29 for Irish women is one of the highest in the world—and in the proportions between the sexes: this is a subject badly in need of investigation. Statistical and economic studies we must have, but we need also to regard man as something more than a profit-making being. Peasant society is only to a limited extent drawn into the world of money: rural debts are often merely the sign of a social obligation. It is with the maintenance and continuity of society that the peasant community is concerned: hence its importance for the future of civilisation.

While communal schemes and the manifold rights and duties of the peasant have been disturbed by landlordism and

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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individual ownership they have by no means entirely collapsed. The principle of service, of mutual aid within the local family groups, survives; the element of competition is reduced to a minimum. Though the old social laws have been "abolished" by acts of parliament, such external decrees could destroy only the superficial features and hardly touched the minds in which these customs were rooted. The primary unit of land division—the townland—is still a very real thing; and as the townland retains its Gaelic name even in the districts of Dublin and Belfast, so there survives beyond the city's influence the social fabric of the townland community. Reeves and Joyce have argued that the careful subdivision of Irish land points to the existence of a considerable settled population in remote antiquity, and recent archæological research supports this view. There are no less than 62,205 townlands in the country; their size, which varies from curiosities of less than an acre to large tracts of moorland of 1,000 acres, averages 325 acres.

The townlands in turn group themselves into baronies corresponding to the petty kingdoms of old. Writers tell us that even into the 19th century one barony could be easily distinguished from another by the dresses peculiar to each. Thus there were the dark blue and damson of Cork and Waterford, the grey of Kerry and the blue of Galway. A traveller in 1830 remarked wisely that "such peculiarities frequently point out the natural divisions of a country in more important matters than dress": they are an index to regional diversity. The distinctive features of particular districts are well illustrated in the case of "the Irish Flanders," the isolated tract in Co. Wexford comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth; while nothing could reveal the separateness of some island communities better than the heaviest punishment meted out to offenders in Rathlin or Clear I.: it consisted of "banishment to Ireland."

Enough has been said to suggest that the traditions of the Irish countryside are of long standing, and that many strains in those traditions are not only of Celtic but of pre-Celtic antiquity. Before we consider some of the relics of the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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342 can be shown or assumed to be additions. A wicker windbreak of birch or hazel (called the wassock or corrag in Co. Antrim), was occasionally erected at one side of the door. Here, too, there was often a stone bench or "stile." The chimney generally betrays its modernity by being built of brick, but wooden or wattled chimneys, neatly thatched and bound with sugán, are not uncommon, and there are a few chimneyless dwellings still inhabited in the west. Old houses frequently have no more than a few inches of chimney projecting, and it is recorded that when efficient chimneys were built by improving landlords they were promptly covered with a sod, "because the smoke keeps them warm." It remains to be said that in former days house-building, like so many tasks demanding much labour, was a communal affair. "The custom on such occasions"—the scene is Donegal a century ago—"is for the person who has the work to be done to hire a fiddler, upon which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing and working while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day."

[476]
[482]
[535]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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241 407 [492] struck a rock, thus saving the share, the traces and the ploughman from injury. The tying of the tail-hair to the traces, which were commonly of sugán or fir rope, required a difficult knot known in later days to very few. This undoubtedly ancient practice seems to have been linked with other customs such as walking backwards before the plough horses, burning the corn in the straw, and plucking or clipping wool from the sheep whenever it was required. It appears that we have in this group of survivals an older culture-laver overlaid by newer methods some of which are themselves of high antiquity. There is some evidence that the original simpler wooden plough mentioned below, together with the clod-breaker and the winnowing tray (Chapter 14) belong to the older layer, whereas the improved wooden plough, the harrow and the flail are later arrivals.

English visitors of the 18th century and the writers of the Statistical Accounts published by the Royal Dublin Society have given many particulars of the varying practices of a century and a half ago. From them we select a few observations. The method of ploughing in Co. Clare was to use four horses abreast, the driver walking backwards between the two middle horses. This is also described as "the old method" in Co. Roscommon. Four oxen were employed in Co. Dublin and Co. Tipperary, "never less than four oxen or four horses" in Kilkenny, six in Meath, three in Fermanagh and two in King's County. The large teams of some regions may imply that co-aration had at one time been practised. [476 171] The four horses of the north Antrim plough-team were contributed or "pooled" by four farmers under the system of "morrowing" or "neighbour dealing" which finds ready parallels in Scotland. In Co. Clare this pooling custom is known as "cooring," and in other parts as "milling." The Irish farm horse, it should be remembered, is a small light breed: except near large towns heavy cart horses are rarely seen.

Nevertheless in the more backward parts the two horse plough seems to have been general, as it is to-day, and it has been supposed that the two-ox plough was standard in early

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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digging or shovelling. For these processes the digging fork and long-handled shovel are the proper tools. (Fig. 65). It should also be remarked that the preparation of lazy-beds was communal team-work, undertaken by groups of from 8 to 16 men who shared their labour under the system of voluntary co-operation which distinguished the village community. The custom is maintained in a few localities.

The loy served in certain districts as a dibber for setting the potatoes "against the back of the spade." but various special dibbers were also used. There was, for instance, the large two-handed "steeveen" found from Co. Leitrim to Co. Clare. As another example of a dibber we illustrate the clumsy-looking "stamp" from Co. Armagh (Fig. 47), employed in sowing turnips. Reference will be made elsewhere (Chapter 16) to the use of seaweed as manure. Old thatch, with its content of soot from the turf fire, is occasionally used as a fertilizer, and I am told that in Achill Island miniature stone, sod or turf buildings used as "soot houses" are roofed with rafters and scraws each autumn. Fires are lit in them, the smoke depositing soot on its passage through the thatch. This is then stripped off and, with the ashes of the fires, spread on the land as manure in spring. The thatch of the Hebridean black houses was utilized in the same way.

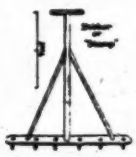

Fig. 47.

A practice which was formerly widespread and attracted a great deal of heated discussion in the period of agricultural development at the end of the 18th century was the preparing of waste ground for cultivation by "paring and burning," or "denshiring." It seems probable that this was a survival of ancient custom, and I believe that old-fashioned tool, the flachter, was probably employed for the purpose, just as its sister-tool, the breast-plough, was in England. Many types of tools were perfected for land reclamation, including a special skinning-plough. In the south-west a heavy hoe or mattock, known as a graffan—similar to the implement still used in Kerry for breaking clods on potato ridges—was popular as a paring tool, the sod being rolled with the foot as it was cut. By such laborious processes, and by centuries of

492 246 ing the hay to the haggard presents itself, quick advantage can be taken of the weather by transporting the cocks as single loads by the simple process of putting a rope round the bottom and hauling them with a horse or two to the haggard. I have also seen a long iron runner placed under the cock, [493] which is thus " sliped " home, but on larger farms a hay-cart is employed. The Irish hay-cart is a specialized vehicle, used for no other purpose : its low platform can be backed against the cock, which is then drawn on to it by a winding gear. This is an interesting example of the versatility which the Irish have shown in developing the two-wheeled cart, their primary mode of transport (Chapter 12). When other horse-drawn [407] implements are employed in hay-making they are frequently old-fashioned in their sturdy simplicity, for example the wooden hay rake or " sweep " with its long ash teeth.

246 In the haggard (" hay-guard ") the stacks are built on prepared foundations of stones and heather or bushes which " draw the wind in under." Sometimes one sees them built [171] around an upright pole, as in the Tyrol and elsewhere abroad. The stacks are either circular (" pikes " in Co. Antrim) or oblong (" havels ") : there are advantages and disadvantages attaching to both shapes and it is doubtful whether, as has been suggested, there is any correlation with regional house-shapes and types. But local styles and methods of finishing the stack need working out. The rush thatch is secured by hay-ropes crossed and recrossed in various patterns or applied as a continuous spiral (Fig. 51).

248 Flax, probably one of the oldest Irish crops, was grown very widely before the Industrial Revolution brought a concentration in the north-east. Small patches are still grown in Donegal for the sole purpose of providing the thatch, the tradition of flax cultivation surviving long after the home industries of spinning and weaving died out. Though mechanical pullers are now being adopted, the flax crop, which must be drawn out, roots and all, is one that lends itself to [476] hand labour. Teams of 8 or a dozen pullers—and sometimes as many as thirty—work together, the men being exchanged or "swapped" between neighboring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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314 the homestead as preparations are made to visit the bog, which may lie at any distance up to some miles away. I fancy turf-cutting was one of the tasks undertaken in the old days by the young people who took the cattle to the booleys. It used to be a communal task, for instance in Donegal until lately [476] six or eight men with their women and child helpers would pool their labour, receiving their meals for the day from the owner of each successive bank to be cut. Similarly each man would take his burden-creel to assist in the communal gathering and stacking in July or August.

Fig. 83. The flachter in use, Coolnagoppoge, Co. Antrim.

Fig. 84. Flachter in "at rest" position.

The first process in turf-cutting is the removal of the surface "parings"—the scraw—consisting of tough matted roots, coarse grass and moss, to a depth of anything from three or four inches to as much as 18 inches. The scraw is not taken as fuel except in areas where turf is scarce, but in some localities where the bogs have all been cut out, as in Rathlin and Tory, thin scraw scraped off the rock is the only fuel, and a very dirty and inefficient fire it makes. A broad spade is employed for paring, supplemented by some sharp cutting tool such as a hay-knife (Fig. 82), or an old scythe blade hafted and fitted with a foot-spur, for notching the vertical

[413]

Fig. 82.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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the rural community. It is convenient for the farmer to live among his fields near his stock—to look after the calving cow—and for the farmer's wife to keep a close watch on her poultry. (Not long ago, as we shall see, it was quite common for the cows to share the kitchen, and the cow-byre and dwelling house are still often under the same roof.) But for jobs requiring traction-implements or expensive tools the help of neighbours is necessary. The small family-farm can support only one horse, and thus there is a good deal of co-operation, perforce, among neighbours in tilling the ground, in harvest work and other operations. Both seed-time and harvest are, in the Irish climate, seasons of heavy pressure, when the work must be got through speedily, and nothing is so conducive to speed as a 'gathering' of neighbours among whom a spirit of rivalry acts as a spur. These relics of former communal habits are becoming less frequent with mechanization, but in many districts not less than a quarter of the small farmers possess only one horse, so that 'joining' or 'cooring' to make up a two-horse team is usual. In all such cases no money payments are made. A fairly common practice, however, is for the small farmer to buy a second horse at the February fairs and sell it in May after the spring work is finished.

In this and other ways the isolated houses are bound by ties of neighbourhood and friendship so that one may think of them as forming close-knit communities lacking only the physical nucleation of former times. The improving planners, eager to confer urban amenities on the countryside, would have 'housing schemes' and planned villages in place of scattered houses, but nothing could be less suitable under existing conditions. Physical independence is the price paid for good neighbourliness. The old clachans, necessary so long as the infield-outfield or rundale method of land-use was practised, became a hopeless anachronism when new tools and new crops brought with them a rotational system and hedged fields.

We have little knowledge of the nature of rural settlement in sixteenth and seventeenth century Ireland, but since partnership farming, presumably with clachans and rundale, is well attested in ancient Ireland and is known to have been widespread in the eighteenth century it is safe to suppose that there was a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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and among the farming population a new roof is hardly ever covered with thatch. The country thatcher finds employment in patching, not thatching.

The erection of such simple houses as I have described did not call for the services of specialists. When the need arose the collective skills of a whole community were available, and one can readily see how prescribed methods were handed down in any particular area. 'The custom on such occasions', wrote Lord George Hill[1]—he is speaking of Donegal in the years before the Great Famine—'is for the person who has the work

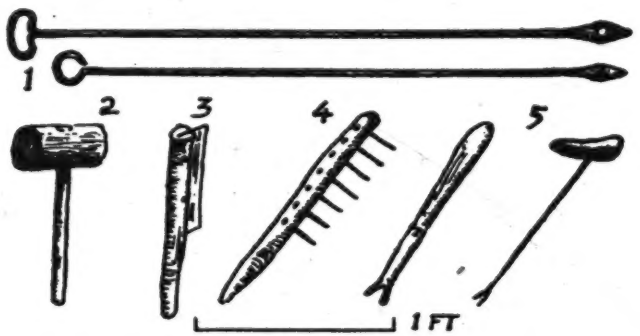

FIG. 15. Thatching tools. (1) Needles, the upper one for hay or fir ropes. (2) Mallet. (3) Trimming knife. (4) Rake. (5) Spurtles for stappling and patching. All from Co. Down except the last, from Co. Meath.

to be done to hire a fiddler, upon which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing and singing while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day'. Like all work done in common, the thatching too was regarded as a sort of festival. In the Aran Islands 'from the moment a roof is taken in hand there is a whirl of laughter and talk till it is ended, and, as the man whose house is being covered is a host instead of an employer, he lays himself out to please the men who work with

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 40.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 him'.[1] Synge goes on to remark that much of the intelligence
476 and charm of the islanders is due to the absence of a division of
527 labour and to the wide development of each individual. Truly it may be said that with the disappearance of the thatched house something more than a picturesque archaism passes from the land.

[1] J. M. Synge, *The Aran Islands*, 156.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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intense effort, when the toilers were spurred on by rivalries in their efforts to avoid the bad luck which tradition wisely bestowed on the laggards. The seasonal festivals which marked the end of these periods of strain—at the beginning of May and November—were not merely celebrations of work completed and a new season begun, but also the occasion for the release of emotional stresses. The Irishman's capacity for bouts of strenuous work, and his more notorious addiction to spells of complete idleness, are surely related to the experience accumulated through countless springs, harvests, and winters. Winter was a dead season for man as for the world around him. It was no time for fairs, fighting or raiding, for selling or even stealing animals which were not worth the trouble of stealing: the problem was to maintain life in them.

Long tradition explains the neglect of winter ploughing which is still characteristic of the greater part of Ireland. The infield stubble was required to augment the very poor and limited outfield grazing available for the wintering stock. There are some townlands, in the west, where to this day all the fields become common grazing during the winter, and only the strongly-enclosed 'gardens' are safe places to grow cabbages, for instance, or a little rye for the thatch. Moreover even with improved ploughs the grass tends to grow in the furrows of ploughed land during a mild winter. And when it is recalled that much of the old infield land was on sloping ground, if only for the sake of the natural drainage thus provided, it can be conceded that there was wisdom in not breaking the earth in winter and opening the way to soil erosion. Moreover the loss of fertility by the leaching of exposed soils can be serious.

Preparing the land for seed had thus to await the spring, and pressure of time as well as the uncertainties of weather strengthened the tradition of co-operative labour in the form of pooled plough-teams in the infield and gangs of ridgemakers in the outfield. The plough-team, normally of four horses or oxen supplied by as many neighbours, had to be supplemented by spade and mell, for the furrows were badly turned, and after the seed-bed had been prepared and the corn sown the seed was covered with shovelled soil. In order to facilitate drainage,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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241 476 in the days before field drains, the land was ploughed in ridges or 'lands' some ten or twelve feet wide, separated by trenches which provided the soil for burying the corn. Lazy-beds, that is spade-ridges for potatoes, made even heavier demands on many hands (Fig. 46). A writer in the 1830s describing the scene in the fields as neighbours worked together in teams, remarks that 'these congregations give vivacity to the labour . . . and occasionally an animated shout is set up by the whole body'.[1] The pooling of labour resources, 'sharing' or 'morrowing'—there are several terms for this co-operative system—is still by no means uncommon even if there is nowadays less need for it. It not only cements social relationships but provides the [461] stimulus of competitive effort. In the north of Ireland Protestant and Roman Catholic neighbours frequently share their labour in this way.

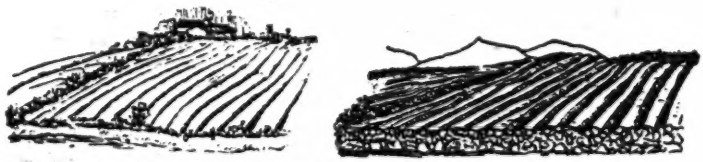

FIG. 46. Ploughed ridges, Co. Cavan, and spade ridges (lazy-beds), Co. Mayo.

241 By tradition the vital spring-time preparations are hedged around with tabus and omens. The ploughman should turn his horses with the sun, from left to right, to invoke its blessing on the work, and when yoking or unyoking his team his horses' heads should be facing south. Friday—which is regarded as a lucky day to begin all operations not needing iron—is the best day to begin sowing, and Good Friday is best of all. The sower going forth should begin his labours with the solemn words 'In the name of God', and he should give the horses a handful of corn from the seed-bag and throw a handful of earth over each horse's rump. Ashes from the turf fire were sometimes mixed with the seed for luck and there are traditions of the ashes of the midsummer bonfires being kept for this purpose.

In some parts of the country, chiefly in the south and east, the sower carried a straw seed-basket, and this is presumably

[1] Isaac Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 660.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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HARVEST

When the scythe was transferred from the mowing of hay to the cutting of corn during the second half of last century there was much opposition from the reapers, sometimes for the good reason that little fields full of great boulders or the stumps of bog-fir gave no space to swing a scythe, and a single blow on the fast-moving point may ruin the blade. But one suspects that conservatism was rooted in magic. It is said that the rice-growers of Malaya refuse to use a scythe because its slashing motion would frighten away the spirits of the rice. Some such notion may have strengthened the Irishman's condemnation of the scythe. And I find another curious parallel with the Far East. The Malayan reaper hums like an insect while he is cutting the rice, perhaps to soothe the spirits of the living crop. In Ireland there is an old belief that an insect kept in a little box fastened to the handle of hook or scythe will bring luck and give the blade greater cutting power. Both scythe and sickle are personal possessions and their luck is personal: they are loaned with reluctance. When a sickle is borrowed it should not be passed directly from hand to hand but thrown on the ground and then picked up. This belief, which applies to all pointed objects, may be explained by the danger of handling a sharp tool, for bad luck is often related to bad practice.

But before coming to corn harvest the handling of flax should be described. Unpleasant handling it is, even if not quite so onerous (and odorous) as working with hemp or jute. When grown for fibre flax is harvested after the pale blue flowers have fallen but before the seed ripens, and because it is the stalk that is being harvested it is not cut but pulled up by the roots. 'Lint' is a crop of the small family farm, for many hands are required, teams or 'boons' of anything from half a dozen to thirty people gathering from neighbouring farms and working together in a festival spirit which reaches its climax in the evening dance. The tough flax is hard on the hands and the stooping is back-breaking. But the beets (sheaves) are carefully put together, for they have to be spread after retting and the stalks should lie evenly. The three handfuls which compose the beet are laid down at slightly different angles so that they will separate easily. A standard beet is reckoned to be 22 inches in diameter. The bands (ties) are prepared beforehand and consist

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and houses. There is a marked loosening of inhibitions at this time. The occasion is something of a festival, of picnic meals and keen appetites, so that tea is said to taste better at turf-cutting than at any other time. After the March winds and the lengthening days of spring have dried the bog surface there is a stirring in the homesteads, the well-worn tools are pulled out of their hiding-places and the smith is kept busy repairing spades and barrows. Bright new tools litter the town pavements on fair day, and the countryman chooses his new slane with an exhibition of caution that seems superfluous until one remembers that an ounce of weight or an inch of length can make the difference between smooth ease and back-break. April, everywhere the driest month of the year, is the best month for cutting: an early start gives the turves a better chance of drying, but the planting of crops keeps the men busy till the end of the month, so that May is the likeliest time to see them in the bogs. There is an old belief that to facilitate drying, peat should be cut when the moon is waning (Pl. 9, 1).

A whiff of turf smoke drifting from a hidden fire where the tea is brewed is the first sign that the bog is peopled. If it is a deep bog you will look in vain for signs of activity, but once you have been seen dozens of heads pop up from deep cuttings and the diggers welcome a break for a smoke and a 'crack'. Turbary rights are extremely complicated, but with the decreasing demand for turf there is little dissension even when banks are communally owned. Nowadays each family generally has its own bank or cutting-face, but it is customary for two or three families to pool their labour and work at each bank in turn. The owner of the bank by tradition provides food for the helpers. On the average a week's cutting provides sufficient fuel for each family, but the time taken and the amount required depend on the nature of the bog and on the quality of the turf. Ideally the season's cut should contain a proportion of brown top turf, that is light sphagnum peat for summer firing, and a proportion of black bottom peat for winter use: this is moist humified peat which dries hard as a brick and burns almost like coal. The amount required is measured by the load, that is the load of a small one-horse cart. I was told in Donegal that a good team of four men, cutting, lifting, wheeling and spreading,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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222 674 of the common people and have not been caught in the net of written records, it is still harder to throw light on some of the darker aspects of shore life. Both smuggling and wrecking have almost everywhere at one time or another been regarded as legitimate methods of obtaining food and acquiring goods from the sea. A dread harvest from ships sunk by enemy action was reaped with seeming callousness during two world wars by coastal dwellers who would risk their own lives in the process. Driftwood has always been an acceptable gift, and many a fisherman's cabin is roofed with ship's timbers and its fittings augmented with ship's furniture. Nearly all these varied shore activities demand a measure of co-operation, and one finds that communal schemes of one kind and another and old ways and beliefs live long among folk who have to deal with the sea. Collective effort is necessary in hauling boats and handling nets, and while there are traditional rivalries between different coastal settlements each one tends to be a closely knit community displaying a strong spirit of independence. They were often able to resist the repressive hand of landlords and they still remain suspicious of the efforts of government bodies to improve their lot.

222 476

[186]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

next to the new one. Built in 1899, the present chapel has a bell tower in its yard, 346
and 500 feet from it on a trail leading north to the common land is a shrine made
of cement depicting Christ crucified, which was constructed in 1950. A curate who 793
lives in a rented house in Low Village looks after the spiritual needs of the people 794
of Inis Beag and those living in Inis Thiar. He travels to and from the neighboring [505]
island by canoe, although occasionally he takes advantage of the ship servicing the
islands when its schedule coincides with his own. The region has been served by
a parish priest since late in the eighteenth century following the relaxation of the
Penal Laws, but only in 1919 did a curate take up permanent residence in Inis Beag.
Prior to that the island was visited by clerics from the parish church and sometimes
from the mainland.

It is not known when the first elementary school was established in Inis 871
Beag, but the islanders claim that at least some formal education was provided
from the early nineteenth century on, first by landlords and then by the govern-
ment. Today, a "national school" with seven grades, or "standards," built in 1943, 872
stands on a terrace above the east end of the strand. Its 90 pupils are taught by 346
three instructors, two of whom are local girls and the third, the "headmaster," an
outsider. The base of the school building and the low walls surrounding it are
banked with accumulating sand, which has created much resentment against the
government for having put up the structure there rather than in a more protected
location, as advised by the folk. The former school, located next to the watch tower
on the promontory above Castle Village, was sold to an islander after it was
abandoned, and he partially razed it to obtain valuable building materials.

Three keepers are maintained in Inis Beag by the Irish Lights Service. 502
One or two men and their families made up the lighthouse personnel until 1929,
when a severe storm greatly damaged the installation and caused the women and
children to be ordered off the island for their safety. The keepers are rotated, with
two men on duty while a third vacations for two weeks, and from time to time
islanders serve as relief and maintenance workers and help unload supply ships.
A symbiotic relationship exists between the folk and the keepers, wherein the [476]
former are employed in the above and other capacities by the service, and the
latter dispense kerosene and other equipment, it is alleged, to pay for goods and
services provided them, such as craft objects which are sold on the mainland for
personal profit. The keepers attend church, utilize the shops, and occasionally pay [574]
visits to local households, and these visits are reciprocated by a few men and
children.

Trails, wells, springs, land areas, and coastal features also figure promi- 823
nently in the lives of the islanders. Place-names have been attached to each, most
of which were created prior to this generation, although fields in certain land areas
still are being named as they are manufactured. It is thought that many of the
place-names refer to archaic events, persons, and geographical conditions, and
legends have come to surround some of them. Others are meaningless in that their
constituent words no longer are understood because of either sound shifts or sheer
cultural loss. The derivation of place-names is a common topic of conversation,
and often prolonged and heated arguments arise over, for instance, the identity of
the man after whom a crag is named or the time at which buildings disappeared

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *curach*, much as did their grandfathers. The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other manifestations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in membership from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and